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ABSTRACT

This paper examines issues in the education of students with emotional or behavioral disorders (EBD), especially those issues that impinge upon teachers or which teachers directly affect. The paper cites many findings from a report by Jane Knitzer and others titled "At the Schoolhouse Door," which is critical of much educational practice in the EBD field. The paper describes qualifications of teachers of children and adolescents with EBD. It criticizes the "curriculum of control" that exists in many schools and that emphasizes controlling behaviors rather than focusing on academics. Research is cited showing that the emphasis on control tends to generate the very behaviors that EBD placement is designed to ameliorate. Examples of stimulating, effective classrooms are also cited. The paper notes problems with teacher burnout in the EBD field and describes the content of EBD teacher preparation programs. A debate is summarized on the relative importance of university training versus personal qualities in the making of a master teacher. Teacher training programs should offer student teachers the opportunity to develop and practice the same social skills they will be expected to develop in students in EBD classes. The need for continuing professional development support for teachers is also addressed. (28 references) (JDD)

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THROUGH THE CLASSROOM DOOR: WHAT TEACHERS AND STUDENTS NEED

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At the Schoolhouse Door by Jane Knitzer, Zina Steinberg, and Brahm Fleisch is subtitled An Examination of Programs and Policies for Children with Behavioral and Emotional Problems. The examination is broad indeed. Published in 1990 by New York's Bank Street College of Education, the book is the report of an exhaustive study that includes information from two large national surveys of state directors of special education and child mental health officials, site visits to 26 programs in 13 states, written and telephone descriptions of 130 programs across the country, 200 replies to parent questionnaires, and a review of relevant policy and research literature.

Authors Knitzer, Steinberg, and Fleisch sought and reported answers to questions about nine dimensions of programming:

- promising school-based or school-related program models
- parental involvement in children's education and treatment
- multi-agency responses to the needs of seriously troubled students
- promising state level policy initiatives, present and needed
- needs for change in state policies for delivery of services
- regular education preventive or early identification programs
- ways for regular educators to serve at-risk students
- modifications of the federal role to benefit identified and at-risk students
- advocacy to interagency services to students and their families.

The findings from this survey touch upon most elements of educating students with emotional or behavioral disorders (or EBD as the noun and related adjective will be here abbreviated); they are too numerous to list completely. The majority of findings range from discouraging to scathing, which is the overall impression the report leaves with this reader even though the authors take pains to describe points of strength or improvement.

Of particular emphasis for this paper are those elements of the overall report which impinge upon teachers or which teachers directly affect. These include:

- The national prevalence rate of EBD is about .96 percent, only 10 to 30 percent of epidemiological predictions.

- Of identified students, 18 percent are removed not only from the mainstream, but also from school. A large number of these, varying with locale, receive homebound instruction, typically for as little as an hour a day.

- Academic deficiencies are the rule with only 30 percent of EBD students performing at grade level.

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• Between one-quarter and one-half of identified students live in poverty.

• "The curriculum emphasis is often on behavioral management first" with a central concern upon behavioral point systems. "Yet often, these seemed largely designed to help maintain silence in the classroom, not to teach children how better to manage their anger, sadness, or impulses." (p. xii)

• Despite an alleged lack of social skills, "the school day provides limited and sometimes only artificial opportunities . . . for [these students] to master experiences of cooperating with peers, playing sports, participating in extracurricular activities, or even enjoying recess." (p. xiii)

• Although with a disability markedly troubled by changes in routine, students receive little assistance with transitions — in and out of special education, from one district school to another, or even from one class to another.

• "Parent-teacher-school relationships are often strained or antagonistic. . . Parents themselves are often inordinately stressed, and teachers are ill-equipped to respond." (p. 75)

• Whether children with identified emotional and behavioral disorders get sustained mental health services "is a matter of chance or economics" (p. 14), as parents pay for most mental health services and only 34-44 percent of those students who do receive counseling or therapy are seen for more than five sessions in a year.

• "Teachers of students with serious behavioral or emotional disorders also often experience a sense of isolation and lack support systems." (p. xiii)

• Citing figures of the declining number of teacher certifications and of increasing rates of attrition, the authors summarize: "Shortages of specially trained teachers, frequent burnout, and high turnover rates (with average tenure three years) seem chronic." (p. 19) "What data we have both from the most recent reports, and indeed from earlier ones as well, paint a bleak picture." (p. 17)

At the Schoolhouse Door is a long report, a powerful statement, an indictment of much current practice at all levels. In a tone of well-tempered outrage, Knitzer, Steinberg, and Fleisch describe one dreary scene after another of life in classrooms as experienced by emotionally or behaviorally disabled students. Although they describe some exemplary programs and arrangements, most solutions they offer for making them the rule instead of exceptions require major restructuring of federal, state, mental health system, university, and school district policy and financial priorities.

The picture the authors paint is daunting, but here, in this paper, we will look closely at just one figure in the center of the painting — the teacher. What is the teacher to do? Given the apparently sorry state of the profession they have chosen or at least find themselves in, how will teachers gain the training and the support they need personally to carry on, let alone to change children's lives?

LIFE IN CLASSROOMS — WHO ARE THE TEACHERS?

Through the classroom door — eight, ten, or twelve students, maybe one classroom aide — and one teacher. One-hundred eighty or ninety days a year, maybe two, three, or four years with the same kids, the same teacher. No matter who crowds to the schoolhouse door — policy makers, program evaluators, mental health people, parents, district administrators — from the first tardy bell in the morning until the last bus pulls away in the afternoon, the day is the teacher's to plan, coordinate, and execute.

Who are the teachers of children and adolescents with EBD, and what is their world? According to results of a recent survey of 145 special education administrators in 27 states, teachers remain the

primary persons responsible for writing and implementing curriculum, for selecting and using behavior intervention techniques, and for determining students' readiness for reentry into mainstream classes (Grosenick, George, George, & Lewis, 1991). And yet, only 52 percent of the same administrators indicated that their staffs were fully certified in the area of behavior disorders. In Iowa, for example, placements into fully categorical programs have diminished in favor of multi-categorical programs serving students with behavioral, mental, or learning disabilities. To be a fully qualified teacher in one of these models, that are referred to as multi-categorical self-contained-with-integration programs, the teacher needs to be certified in only two disability areas, and given the preference among most teachers not to work with children with behavior problems, it would seem likely that their two preferences will have been other than EBD. In the spirit of cross-categorical training and programming, however, these teachers will be "officially" qualified by the State to work with such students, unlike the many other teachers working under temporary certification.

Does it really matter whether teachers of emotionally and behaviorally disordered students have been specifically trained for their roles? Later in this paper, the possibility that there are natural teachers whose personality traits make them master teachers whether they have been trained or not will be discussed, and surely there are some such. Some classroom aides, for instance, seem to be more gifted than their supervising teachers. Recent studies, furthermore, have found that observations of categorical classrooms reveal few if any differences between the teaching activities or programs in EBD classes and those for children with learning disorders or mental disabilities (Algozzine, Morsink, & Algozzine, 1988) or between less and more restrictive EBD programs (Gritzmacher, 1990). These authors reasoned thereby that there may be little justification for differentiating between the training of EBD teachers and that of teachers for other disabilities. They came to their conclusions because the teachers they observed apparently demonstrate exactly the kinds of teaching practices that Knitzer, Steinberg, and Fleisch found to be so stultifying in EBD classrooms in general. Teaching behaviors most in evidence in the observations of Algozzine et al. were related to demonstrating proper listening skills and giving clear directions; those of lowest occurrence were behaviors using positive reinforcement and providing learner feedback; only moderately evident were rates of providing group communication, developing student self-feedback, and using effective classroom management.

It would be a helpless view to conclude that since there are no particular differences in the rates of behaviors between teachers of differently handicapped students, there is nothing to be done. That is as though to say, "Teachers are all going to be more interested in quiet listening and in direction-following than in anything else no matter what you teach them to do, so why bother trying." This is most despairing of EBD teachers whose students have been placed under their care precisely because their handicaps require that they have more feedback, more positive responses to their efforts, more group communication skills and behavior management than other groups whose handicaps are primarily defined by their learning difficulties. In fact, of the EBD teachers observed by Algozzine and his colleagues, the ones who were seen least often of all groups to use positive reinforcement patterns were the EBD teachers. To abandon teachers' needs for learning the programming skills that match the needs of this most demanding of student groups simply because they haven't learned them so far makes no sense. It is certainly a non-teacherly perspective.

Under the subtitle The 3 R's: Academics as Afterthought, Knitzer, Steinberg and Fleisch describe the same dearth of higher order teaching behaviors that Algozzine, Morsink, and Algozzine found in their study:

> Across the country, and across economic and racial boundaries,

> schools are very much alike. This is not true only in special education, but has been carefully documented for regular education as well. (p. 25). . . [In] the classrooms we visited (particularly the self-contained classrooms), teachers used a very limited, and apparently ineffective set of teaching strategies. . . Our observations confirm the haphazard nature of most curricula activities, sadly, even in programs notable for other strong components such as a mental health presence or careful work with families. (p. 27)

CLASSROOMS OF CONTROL

The most severe criticisms leveled by Knitzer, Steinberg, and Fleisch are not against the poor academic teaching practices that they describe, but against that part of EBD programming that they term "the curriculum of control."

> A common variable underlying the overwhelming majority of classes and school structures is the emphasis on control. In this regard, special education and regular education have much in common.
>
> But for children labelled emotionally or behaviorally handicapped, control is even more a central part of schooling. The often more subtle and implicit mechanisms of control in regular education become explicit, clearly visible and widely supported as 'necessary.' Too often the dominant curriculum is not the traditional academic curriculum, nor is it about concepts, thinking, and problem solving. Instead the curriculum is about controlling the behaviors of the children. The reward system is alike for teachers and students. A quiet class is highly regarded and few supervisors, administrators or even parents look much beyond this. (p. 25)

Why do Knitzer and her colleagues find the dominant EBD curriculum to be "about controlling the behaviors of the children"? Why do we all, to some degree or another buy into this "curriculum of control?" The answers are complex and so deeply anchored in our beliefs about what children and grown-ups, let alone teachers, are about that they are tough to examine.

There are at least ten possible answers:

• Controls are necessary for an orderly, productive existence. When we lose control, we are at risk for dangerous or at least unpleasant consequences. As we are grown-ups, we know that fact to be true from our own cumulative experiences. As we are teachers, we devote our professional lives to the notion that we can teach children what we know that they do not already know, that they will be better off for it, and that they might even thank us for it sometime.

• Somewhere in the hearts of most of us is a desire, felt rarely or frequently, to show disobedient, mouthy children and teens just what authority is and who has it. We may genuinely believe that enforcing limits is the best lesson we can teach, or we may react that way only when we sense we are losing — our dignity, a battle, our touch.

• Everybody knows that controlling is what teachers are supposed to do. Teachers have known that from the time they were little girls (rarely boys) playing school. Remember the scoldings, the bossy directions, the hands on hips, the recesses denied, the principals sent to? Some teachers, the warmest, most easy-going people in the faculty lounge, are stricken with facial paralysis when they encounter students. They do not smile, they become severe, austere, bent on control. This seems to be a role, one of which they are scarcely aware. Note how

much like playing school this sounds:

> But in many of the classrooms we visited, group work is not allowed, children's comments are squelched and question and answer format of the most teacherly kind is the only form allowed. If children talk, they lose points, if they exchange baseball statistics, the cards are taken away. Helping each other is called cheating — genuine excitement is rare. (p. 28)

• From the start, the degree to which boys and girls are or are not presumed to be "in control" is a primary factor in how sympathetically they are viewed and treated and where they are placed. There "lurks an implicit belief that somehow socially maladjusted children are able to control their behavior, while seriously emotionally disturbed or behaviorally disordered children cannot." (p. 9) Control may be the most salient issue of EBD placements. When applied to the classroom, it is often called "structure."

• Behavior modification techniques, when poorly understood and improperly applied, may lead the modifiers to rely most heavily upon external control for management. "In most behavior modification programs, obedience predominates over responsibility, punishment over logical consequences." (p. 64)

• Society expects good teachers to have "excellent classroom control," perhaps above all else. When students misbehave, it reflects at least as poorly on their teachers as on themselves, a negative halo effect all EBD teachers have felt at one time or another, if not from their administrators, then probably from a regular education colleague or a faculty lounge clique.

• Some published programs such as Assertive Discipline (Canter & Canter, 1976) or the Boys Town Model (Michael, 1987) are tremendously popular because they offer teachers completely prescribed, ready-to-operate methods of control. The skillful teacher is able to be flexible and encouraging while using them, but their strongest appeal may be to teachers inexperienced or insecure about their ability to cope with students' misbehavior. In such programs, they may find an ability to control and be in control that they sense they lack.

• Teachers fear their students. They are unsure what students will do if given an inch. If they allowed students free choice or free movement or free time to talk with friends, who knows if teachers would be able to regain control.

• Being controlling may be due to basic traits that are part of some individuals' personalities. (The possibility that personality is the deciding factor in teacher effectiveness will be discussed later in this paper.)

• Finally, teachers may be struggling — isolated, depressed, or frightened — strong control in silent classrooms the only method they have for dealing with what they fear otherwise would be intolerable.

THE EFFECTS OF CONTROL

Control is not merely pepper in the pot, something there is enough, too much, or too little of according to one's taste. Neither is it intrinsically related only to harshness. In fact, many controlling behaviors are sweet indeed, from giving praise to giving M & M's. A body of research has evolved from Edward Deci's cognitive evaluation theory which discriminates between rewards that are given in order to control children's behavior and those that are given in order to impart information to children about their behavior.

Deci and his colleagues (Deci, Nezlek, & Sheinman, 1981) note that most studies on the effects of rewards and constraints indicate that rewards actually work to <u>decrease</u> intrinsic motivation, clearly something to think about in a world which

Knitzer and her colleagues describe as being preoccupied with the giving of points. They hypothesize, "If rewards are administered in a way that does not emphasize control but rather signifies competence, the theory predicts a maintenance or enhancement of intrinsic motivation. The suggestion, therefore, is that rewards will not undermine intrinsic motivation if they are administered in a way that emphasizes positive competence feedback rather than control." (1981, p. 3) In a classroom, the teacher's attitude about controlling students versus building their autonomy will determine how intrinsically motivated students are. They predicted a correlation between teachers' attitudes toward control versus autonomy and children's feelings about the climate of their classroom. The more positive the students' view of the classroom climate, the greater their intrinsic motivation and the higher their self-esteem were likely to be.

In this study, teachers were asked to choose among solutions for eight typical school problems — the playground bully, stealing, homework not done and such — which represented four basic orientations, two extreme and two moderate positions. These are worth noting for the examples they provide of teacher perspectives on control:

> In Orientation 1, (highly controlling), teachers make decisions about what is right and utilize highly controlling sanctions to produce the desired behavior. In Orientation 2 (moderately controlling), teachers make the decisions and emphasize that the children should for their own good perform the desired behaviors. In Orientation 3 (moderately autonomous), teachers encourage children to compare themselves with others to see how to handle the problem, and in Orientation 4 (highly autonomous), teachers encourage children to consider the relevant elements of the situation and to take responsibility for working out a solution to the problem. (p. 5)

The self-esteem of the 610 fourth through sixth graders who participated in the study had their self-esteem measured twice, once at the end of the first six weeks of school, again near the end of the year. The prediction was that students in a classroom all year with either a control- or an autonomy- oriented teacher would change their original perceptions to either develop higher or lower self-esteem as the year went along. Instead, the researchers made a more startling discovery. There were no meaningful differences between measures of children's self-esteem over the course of the year — the significant relationship between teachers' orientation toward control versus autonomy and students' self-esteem and intrinsic motivation occurred during the first six weeks of school and did not markedly change thereafter.

Think of these findings in relationship to the "playing school" theory of reliance on control techniques. Vernon Jones and Louise Jones (1990) preface their book on classroom management with a reminder that in the 1960s, most teacher training went little beyond such simple prescriptions as "don't smile until Christmas" or "don't grin until Thanksgiving." Think of them in the light of Deci, Nezlek, and Sheinman's findings. Their research suggests that in the first six weeks of the school year, the die for development of student self-esteem is cast for the year — starting to smile in December would be months too late for the affirmation and support youngsters need, sacrificed presumably to show no-nonsense control.

Perhaps playing school is not the problem; perhaps many teachers were deliberately taught the "curriculum of control" in their training programs. Certainly administrators seem to have been. More than one junior and senior high school principal in our Iowa town has launched his school year in the opening assembly speech by letting everyone know the dire consequences that would befall anyone who did in the coming year the rotten things that

students had done the year before — and their assistant principals immediately had behavior to contend with they had not even dreamed of, such as severe vandalism. Should that be so? Isn't firm limit setting from the start a maxim of behavior management? It seems reasonable enough an idea, but the results are predictable. As Jones and Jones explain,

> "In short, the use of power is often effective at intimidating students who need control least and is seldom effective with students whose behavior is most unproductive." (pp. 23-24)

So, it turns out that the curriculum of control is not only dreary; it is counterproductive. It tends to generate the very behaviors that EBD placement is designed to ameliorate. Even those who are successfully ordered by a classroom climate of quiet control may not be internally convinced it is the way to go. Have you experienced or heard tales of the ever-so-well-regulated classroom that no one can handle but the regular teacher? When his or her back is turned, or worse, when the substitute comes, the place turns upside down. Even more pernicious are the findings reported by Allen and Greenberger (1980) of laboratory studies on the relation between hostility and defiance and perceptions of control over events. The less control a person has over objective events, the more satisfaction he or she draws from destructive acts; they create feelings of success that are unavailable elsewhere. Students who experience failures in school are likelier to act in deviant ways to increase, at least temporarily, their feelings of power and self-determination. One high schooler reported to the interviewer that each time he passed a locker he had smashed, he thought with pride, "There's my little destruction to this brand new school." He had made his mark on his environment.

So why, if the curriculum of control can be so damaging, is it so prevalent in EBD classrooms everywhere? In fairness, another cause of teacher's preference for it must be listed:

• The curriculum of control works. We can make our classrooms quiet, a mark of ourselves as good teachers in virtually everybody's book. But even more strikingly, we sometimes truly seem to shape some kids up by showing them the bottom line. We can convince them that appropriate behavior is the only winning card and change their understanding of how the world works — at least it so appears while they are with us, and some youngsters' new behaviors do generalize to mainstream classes and to other environments as well.

Whether or not we choose to operate our classrooms along strictly behavioristic lines, the fact remains that everyone is subject to principles of operant conditioning. What is the most powerful schedule of reinforcement for maintaining a behavior? As we all learned in our first Intro to EBD classes, it is the intermittent schedule of reinforcement — and that is exactly the schedule we teachers are put on by our successes, no matter how rare, with our control-responsive students. If controlling techniques appear to us to be effective in changing children's lives for the better or improving our lives in the classroom or heightening our own feelings of competence even just once in a while, we will almost surely persist in using them. We will do so even in the face of irrefutable evidence that those control techniques are not bringing about improvement in the majority of situations with the greater number of our students and are instead causing dreadful confrontations or boredom or just chronic dissatisfaction.

When our controlling techniques, positive through our bestowal of rewards or negative through our meting out of penalties, are effective, we attribute those successes to our effectiveness as teachers. When our techniques fail, on the other hand, we are likely to blame one or more factors lying within the students themselves. Failing to do this — and EBD teachers do like and defend most of their students as individuals, pointing out how "wonderful they can be on a one-to-one basis" — teachers next look for causes within their students' families. To look

at our own teaching management practices as blameworthy invites feelings of failure and that may be intolerable.

Frederick Medway (1979) concluded from two studies of elementary and middle school teachers conducted in South Carolina that teachers generally perceive the causes of serious school problems to be due primarily to student rather than to teaching environment variables. In one study, he found that if problems were chiefly academic in nature, 67 percent of teachers attributed causality to student learning problems, but if the problems were primarily behavioral, 67 percent judged home problems to be their major cause. Taken together, the two studies indicated that "the more severe behavior problems were perceived to be, the more they were seen as reflecting underlying personality disorders and the less they were seen as resulting from previous educational experiences." (p. 814) Furthermore, problem students perceived as lacking motivation were found to receive more criticism than those perceived only as lacking ability. But we have seen that the less personal competence students feel, the less likely they are to be intrinsically motivated, and certainly external control and criticism do little to foster a sense of personal accomplishment and competence. Again, common practice and a common notion of what <u>should</u> work when dealing with students with problems, control and criticism, are exactly the reverse of what research shows us <u>does</u> work, autonomy and informative affirmation of what one does well.

IF NOT CONTROL, WHAT?

If studies have been revealing such findings to us at least since the 1970s, why have we not all made use of them and created stimulating, effective classrooms that would have been a joy for Knitzer, Steinberg, and Fleisch to behold? Actually, they did find some:

> In most behavior modification programs, obedience predominates over responsibility, punishment over logical consequences. Though children are placed in special [EBD] programs because of their behavioral difficulties, systematic, coherent attempts to help them gain control over their problems is the exception, not the rule. But both in self-contained classrooms and in separate programs we saw and learned about alternatives that supplement more typical strategies (time-out rooms, point and level behavior management systems) with strategies to help students take responsibility for their own actions. Some of these are designed for elementary school children, others for adolescents. (p. 64)

They tell of a fairness committee of EBD student representatives who discuss complaints and plan remedies; of a social skills project where students team with adults to discuss, practice, and try out strategies for use in their lunchrooms and playgrounds; of a "Time-In" room where students in difficulty are helped to relax, gain control, and work out solutions to their problems; of a sophisticated model of behavior management used in a girls' residential treatment facility called a Therapeutic Just Community; of an especially strong extra-curricular activity program involving coaches who teach social skills on the spot. The common attribute of the programs Knitzer, Steinberg, and Fleisch admire is an innovative approach to designing meaningful, rewarding activities through which students will learn ways to fit into their real worlds with less stress, unhappiness, and conflict. In the academic domain where they generally found even less to admire, they sought alternatives to an impoverished life "defined by dittoed worksheets and isolation" (p. 65) but found few to describe.

A group of well-known theorists, researchers, and teacher trainers in the field of emotional/behavioral disabilities who call themselves the Peacock Hill

Working Group, have produced a somewhat more encouraging account of the health and well-being of the EBD field in the United States (Unpublished manuscript, University of Virginia). Noting that the authors of At the Schoolhouse Door have described existing problems "compellingly and comprehensively," they assert that less sweeping reforms than Knitzer and her colleagues call for may be needed:

> Although effective school-based approaches for children and youth with EBD are presently available, a lack of commitment to youngsters and families and the scarcity of resources have stymied their implementation. Recent reports about unacceptable practices and low levels of success in typical school programs for students with EBD foster the impression that totally new approaches are required, but this impression is misleading. Indeed, much that we know can ameliorate these problems. To be sure, research is needed to address critical questions in many areas of practice, but current practices would be dramatically improved were strategies and programs known to be successful consistently implemented. (p. 5)

If so much is known and possible, why are so many teachers having such a difficult time with EBD classes that so much criticism is raining down on them? We know what the outcome of criticism is likely to be — lowered feelings of personal efficacy. It works the same way with adults as with children. With less sense of competence will come a greater need to exert external control over students which will, in turn, be likely to create more rather than fewer problems in the classroom (or on the sneak out of the classroom). Lowered self-esteem in teachers has even been shown to result in smaller academic gains in students over the course of a school year as compared to the progress made by children taught by teachers with high self-esteem (Aspy & Buhler, 1975). With such a discouraging set of outcomes likely, why does any teacher put up with it?

Many do not. The figure given in the Peacock Hill Group paper for teacher burnout is that over a third of teachers surveyed said that they expected to be doing something else within one year. They note one contributing reason to be the low levels of likability and social acceptability of youngsters with EBD. Others reasons are probably related to the unattractive working arrangements EBD teachers are likely to have in many schools. Even where school districts contractually agree to assure teachers one planning period a day, the teacher with the EBD class often or never gets to take it, nor do they have lunch away from the classroom with their colleagues, nor are they ever free of playground duty. Why? The kids behavior is such that no one else can handle them — they eat lunch in the classroom, the teacher goes with them to their specials, and so on. Not only are teachers annealed to their EBD students for the full length of each school day, they often have the same students several years in a row, tough duty for a teacher who may have trouble liking or feeling successful with one or more children in the class. Not infrequently, EBD classes are still stuck in the farthest reaches of the school buildings or in the only room without windows or in a room far too small for a full day's activities or in the auditorium snack shop and storage area since it is never used in the daytime anyway. And they might be in conflict with their superiors for, as the Peacock Hill writers point out, teachers and administrators often do not agree about how to handle students whose behavior is extremely distasteful to them.

WHO TRAINS THE TEACHERS?

The Peacock Hill group states that about 30 percent of teachers currently working in EBD programs are not trained and certified to be doing so; but that

means that about 70 percent, a substantial majority, after all, are. We cannot, therefore, blame whatever problems of teacher inadequacy that now exist simply on a lack of training among the un- or under-certified. Perhaps we can blame, although that is hardly the correct word, the burgeoning amount of research and development in the field, increasing exponentially each year, that raise our expectations of what education for children with EBD can be and must become.

Teachers trained twenty years ago had much theory, many opinions, but few tested programs to learn about in their college programs, and it has apparently been difficult for training programs to be restructured and kept current with the research-based knowledge that has become available since then. For instance, it is still common practice to devote a considerable amount of time in introductory courses to comparing the various perspectives from which to approach the education of emotionally and behaviorally disordered children, the psychodynamic, behavioral, biological, ecological models, as though teachers would then be in a position to select from them as from a menu and plan effective interventions accordingly. Enriching as these conceptual underpinnings may be (Cullihan, Epstein, & Lloyd, 1991), we now have enough experience and research with elements of each that work or do not work to describe best practices confidently, not implying that one will choose between one model or another. Similarly, some traditional sequences devote a great deal of time to preparing teachers in the administration of various standardized tests and questionnaires when, in fact, teachers may spend next to no time actually testing the children who will be placed in their programs -- students arrive at the classroom door already tested to a fare-thee-well by school psychologists or mental health clinicians. Teachers do need to know how to be intelligent consumers of test information, but what they themselves require is training in keeping continual track of student progress, systematically and accurately, and planning their activities accordingly.

Why such stinginess with EBD teacher training time? There is no area of regular or special education that requires acquisition of as many skills as does the EBD area. Academic teaching methodology and subject matter are only a base; the crux of the profession is dealing with elements that thwart the efforts of even the most successful methodologists and content specialists, disturbances in behavior or emotion. Training time seems always far too limited. Teaching EBD teachers how to analyze what needs doing and how to do, think, and say what is needed; teaching not only the skills but the attitudes and people-perceptions needed; providing enough practice for teachers-in-training to develop the degree of confidence they will need to create the warm, interesting, responsive, and effective classrooms in which their students and themselves can thrive -- these are the tasks that have not been done well enough widely enough, or so it seems at this time.

The question of what and how to teach in EBD teacher-training programs and whether or not training is effective was raised recently in another forum. In February, the annual Midwest Symposium for Leadership in Behavior Disorders featured as the question to be considered in the 1991 Young and Restless Debate this issue:

MASTER TEACHERS — PERSONALITY OR UNIVERSITY TRAINING?

Resolved: That the quality and quantity of university training of teachers of behavior disorders have less impact on the development on a master teacher than the person's basic personality traits.

The debate format forced the issue into a polarity with the four debaters having to assume solely affirmative or negative standpoints from which to argue, an either/or position that was difficult to sustain — undoubtedly all would agree to the importance of both training and personal qualities in the making of a master teacher. What was particularly interesting and relevant to this discussion were the personality variables that the

debaters, Rosemary Graves and Thomas Turnage, based their support of the affirmative side of the question upon. Sounding like a refrain throughout their speeches were the the phrases sense of personal competence and self-esteem. Many others were highlighted as well — flexibility, insight, caring, trust, confidence, enthusiasm to name only a few — but a strong over-reaching point the affirmative side made was that it is teachers with confidence in their own abilities to both seek and give help who are able to respond with warmth, empathy, and understanding to their students' needs and to assume the responsibility for shaping the learning environment to meet them without dependence on one particular classroom model or technique. Their arguments were persuasive to the judges of the debate; the affirmative side won.

Debating the negative side of the argument were Larry Wheeler and Tanice Knopp, and they were hard put to squeeze into their allotted speaking times a picture descriptive enough of the enormity and complexity of the task of preparing oneself or others to assume the role of being an EBD teacher. They left the impression that a teacher in training would be so busy acquiring all of these skills that he or she would hardly have time enough even to have a personality — professionality was their watch word. Graves spoke of a master list of competencies (that word again) 200 items long that needed to be mastered in order to be as highly skilled as the job demanded and noted that on such a list, personality issues hardly came into play. Although Wheeler said that no consistent relationship between personality and effectiveness was reported in the literature, it was interesting that he did note the importance of teachers' beliefs about their own capabilities, the same self-perception of competence factor that was spoken of as a personality factor by the other team.

Because of the dichotemized nature of the debate format, a most crucial question was never addressed — to what degree is it possible for one to acquire the favorable personality traits deemed characteristic of master teachers through training? Personality variables were treated as though they were inherent, stable characteristics that one either did or did not possess, but in fact, researchers in social psychology find them to be extremely dependent upon the external circumstances of the environment and the self-perceptions of the individual. David Johnson comments in his book The Social Psychology of Education:

> From the . . . evidence it may be concluded that individuals with personality needs compatible with the teacher's role requirements (warmth, valuing human relations and somewhat conventional and conforming in life style), opt for the vocation of teaching. It should be noted, however, that most of the evidence is correlational and, therefore, a causal relationship has not been established. The same findings could be explained as representing evidence that socialization into the teaching role results in personality traits that are compatible with the teaching role. (1970, p. 57)

This can easily be seen to be so for self-esteem or self-perceived competence as a teacher. While one may arrive at the classroom door with a history of self-confidence building experiences and positive expectations for success, a truly terrible first year of EBD teaching can seriously undermine them. Conversely, the uncertain novice, given support, direct teaching of needed skills, non-threatening corrective feedback, and instructionally-oriented praise for success could develop the sense of personal efficacy that research has shown most likely to have positive outcomes both for her students and herself.

SKILL TRAINING — PERSONALITY TOO?

Are there other such positive personality traits, characteristics that can be taught in order to create

master teachers? If we did not believe it possible to change people's social behavior, we would certainly be wasting a lot of time emphasizing social skills training within our EBD classrooms; certainly highly motivated teachers-in-training should be as teachable as we assume our youngsters to be. In a 1971 review of teacher effectiveness studies, Rosenshine and Furst identified eleven teacher variables that had shown the strongest relationships to student gains in academic achievement. The five strongest were clarity, variability, enthusiasm, task-orientation or business-like behavior, and providing students opportunities to learn criterion material. Anyone trained to think in task-analytical ways could come up with training strategies to teach students to display these behaviors, even one as seemingly a part of built-in personality as enthusiasm. In fact, Rosenshine did exactly that (1970). His observations of teachers revealed that components of enthusiasm were rapid speech, frequent movement, gesture, variation in voice, eye contact, appearing relaxed, asking varied questions, and praising frequently. Coleman (1977) comments:

> If the anxieties of teachers, particularly beginning teachers, and the boredom of students can be somewhat relieved by training teachers to be more enthusiastic or energetic, as the research suggests is possible, this could be a most useful contribution to teacher effectiveness. (p. 223)

Experiences I have had suggest to me that such training is possible and useful. Years ago, I taught in a program staffed by our children's psychiatric hospital and operated in a public junior high school. Our students registered typical complaints about the boringness or hardness or unfairness of various mainstream teachers with whom they were having problems, but one teacher escaped their criticism, the science teacher, Mr. Moler. They thought he was great. When I looked at the homework they brought from his class, it did not appear to be especially stimulating nor geared to their individual learning abilities, nor did the students express any strong interest in the particular science they were studying. New to that school, I guessed that Mr. Moler might be especially good-looking, young, with-it, but when I identified who he was, I saw him to be middle-aged, balding, neither fit looking nor a snappy dresser. I pressed my questions, got a lot more "I don't know . . .he's just nice" answers, but finally got this description: "Well, whenever I go by him in the hall between classes, he always says 'Hi, Scott.'" So I checked the scene between classes. The rule in that school was that teachers were to be in their doorways between bells, watching students pass. A walk down the halls revealed teachers either standing together talking in pairs or alone, arms crossed, faces watchful, true standard bearers of the need for quiet and order in the halls. Mr. Moler, by contrast, relaxed against his doorjamb and said such things as "Hi" or "How's it going," or he nodded, or he just smiled. As time went on and I spent more time in classes, I never discovered anything more remarkably charismatic or reinforcing about Mr. Moler than that he was relaxed, looked at kids when they talked, smiled easily, used their names frequently, and spoke pleasantly. From that, I developed my first set of social skills steps:

> Use eye contact
> Smile
> Say the student's name
> Use pleasant words

I was thrilled with my discovery and taught this magic to good effect in a Methods class I was teaching in the evenings. Later I learned that I that had only re-discovered some of Dale Carnegie's basic ingredients for winning friends and influencing people; later still, I recognized the same steps in various social skills curricula published for use with students. But it has never seemed less magic a discovery or less obvious a deficit among teachers who are having trouble with or hating their EBD classes.

It would be simple-minded indeed to suggest that

all we need to do to teach EBD teachers to be effective and like their jobs is to teach them to smile more often, look at their kids when they talk to them, and quietly exchange everyday pleasantries, and yet when I consult in a classroom where the teacher is having trouble, these are the behaviors that are immediately conspicuous by their absence. Whether the stern faces, distance from students, and eyes focused on academic materials or point sheets except when surveying to catch trouble or fix a bad actor with a piercing stare are the results of hard times or the results of playing teacher from the beginning, never smiling until Christmas, is impossible to say. But they are among the most obvious, attainable behaviors connected with the troubles at hand.

TRAINING FOR DOING

In his book Humanizing Classroom Discipline, Barry Dollar protests, "The recommended treatment for Johnny as given the teacher was to provide structure and set limits. Wonderful! How does this teacher provide structure for Johnny? What will the teacher be doing when she sets limits or provides structure?" (1972, p. 72) It seems to me to be as important to answer this in terms of the affective, cognitive, and social *doings* of teaching as it is to describe various techniques of providing structure and setting limits, now as common a generic recommendation as it was 20 years ago. And today, there are so many techniques to learn that it may be harder to fit those into teacher training curricula than it was in the seventies when the word *humanizing* was okay to say and when many books that focused on the quality of life in classrooms were written. (Other examples of books in that general period especially worth noting for offering helpful ideas instead of merely protests are Inviting School Success by William Purkey (1978), Schools Without Failure by William Glasser (1969), Motivation and Teaching by Raymond Wlodkowski (1978), Life in Classrooms by Phillip Jackson (1968), Between Teacher and Child by Haim Ginot (1972), and Winning Children Over by Francis Walton and Robert Powers, based on the work of Rudolf Dreikers (1974).)

To learn more about the content and focus of University teacher-training programs, I contacted several midwestern colleges and universities. Most fully developed were the materials sent to me by Reece Peterson from the University of Nebraska. The competencies to be taught in courses numbered 90; most related to the technology of teaching, such as demonstrating the ability to assess the technical adequacy of a test or knowing the characteristics of individuals typically labeled as behaviorally disordered. Within some, such as "Demonstrates knowledge of the relationship between students' self-concept and learning", may well be buried expectations for particular social behaviors that will develop positive self-concept and learning, but they are not listed as competencies. The *doing* expectations appear on the 61- item Student Teaching Progress Report which includes a number of general teaching behaviors: "Treats all students with respect and concern"; "Gives criticism which is constructive, praise which is proper"; "Demonstrates poise and confidence"; "Is quick to sense control problems and is effective in handling them"; "Displays interest and enthusiasm for subjects taught"; "Avoids showing bias/favoritism to students"; and "Is adaptable and optimistic". The University of Iowa's similar document includes: "Students appear motivated"; "Uses specific praise"; "Maintains order in the classroom"; and "Builds positive relationships with students." What I wonder is this: What happens if a student teacher flunks adaptability or is only so-so on optimism, for instance, or manages only luke-warm relationships with students? It is a sure bet that he won't be flunked out of his program; and it is a sure bet once alone in an EBD classroom instead of under the supervision and magic spell of a master teacher, those deficiencies will loom ever larger.

The key interaction, affect, and attitude variables that are listed as goals for teachers-in-training to acquire first appear as competencies on student

teaching checklists. Who has taught these skills that are then to be practiced? Do we count on the supervising teachers alone to teach these critical elements of teaching children and teens with emotional and behavioral disabilities through modeling best practices and conferring with their student teachers? But what if the supervising teacher him- or herself lacks these skills? One's impression from reading the criticisms of EBD classrooms and, for that matter, from visiting many of them is that master teachers are in the distinct minority. With many students to place for practice teaching, it seems inevitable that some will be placed with supervising teachers who themselves lack the key skills and attitudes we urgently desire for our next generation of teachers in the field.

Within our university classroom-centered program offerings, do we know how to teach the behaviors associated with enthusiasm or warmth, of giving quiet reprimands, offering instructional praise, assuming non-threatening physical postures, talking an out-of-control student down or a depressed student up, responding to lies, handling anger? Shouldn't we offer to students in our teacher-training programs some of the same opportunities to develop and practice the skills they lack as we offer the youngsters in our EBD classes? But who will do this? The professors themselves? They cannot specialize in all aspects of their field at once; if they are embroiled in research, writing, and scholarly supervision on a college campus, are they also able to keep their child-relationship skills honed sharp? In the University of Iowa College of Dentistry, the staff in the clinics is comprised almost entirely of practicing dentists from nearby communities who are selected to serve as staff dentists several days a month. Their knowledge is based on all the exigencies of the actual practice of their profession. Could not true Master Teachers be selected by university faculty on the basis of demonstrated competence and be made adjunct professors or lecturers within the college of education, charged with the responsibility for training students in the daily problem solving and interaction skills they must have to advance the profession and the progress of their EBD students? As we look to more interagency cooperation, couldn't universities and public schools work together very closely so that master teachers and learning teachers together could work with youngsters in real settings? The involvement of additional experienced adults to work with, for instance, at-risk students should be a strong incentive for public schools, and the status and stipend associated with being an official Master Teacher would be welcome affirmation for superior teachers.

Teacher-training programs for regular educators include micro-teaching activities where such specific teaching strategies as asking open-ended questions are isolated and practiced using videotaped examples and requiring students to demonstrate and videotape their proficiencies in using them. Similarly, counseling programs include micro-counseling classes in which concentrated practice on such techniques as reflective listening is organized by having students work in pairs or groups, giving each other support and feedback until they are able to demonstrate that they have reached criterion on key skills. If they have not already done so in other degree programs, wouldn't it make sense for EBD teachers-in-training to take the counseling and regular education courses that would provide them with the existing mini-skill experiences they undoubtedly need and also to devise others that are specific to the EBD field? Wouldn't it be possible to describe and demonstrate exactly what EBD teachers need to do to promote their students' sense of autonomy, control, and personal competence and then have teachers-in-training practice, role play, receive feedback, and try out their new skills in a classroom until they were truly confident and competent? For instance, Taylor, Adelman, and Kaser-Boyd (1985) gave children a chance for input into their own IEP goals and then taught them to participate effectively in their own IEP meetings. Wouldn't that make an excellent situation for a micro-teaching sequence? What do you say to the oppositional child who would rather argue than agree no matter what? To the anxious child who can't handle stress? To the

teenager who hates being in special ed? Instead of talking about these problems, we should model and role play things to say and do, when and how to say and do them.

If this sounds very much like a social skills class that might be taught to children, it is meant to. College or university education faculty have a tendency to teach as they were taught in the last rewarding classes they took, usually during a Ph.D. program. Only those with a love of journal articles, infinite patience for putting up with lectures, tremendous respect for research, and a zest for debunking the unscholarly would have arrived at this point in life. As they keep up with the literature, make their own contributions to it, and work with their colleagues, professors feel pressure and responsibility to pass along as much of their accumulated knowledge as possible to their students. Perhaps, in tune with a popular book of our times, we need to think instead of our teachers-in-training as kindergartners who need to learn the most important things they should ever know. I do not mean to belittle our students, many of whom have greater stores of knowledge and skill gained from years of classroom teaching than we teacher-trainers have. But I think we need also to analyze very carefully what the day-to-day demands on a teacher working with EBD youngsters will be. Then we need to use what we know about teaching and apply it. If a kindergartner is to learn the color blue, we don't tell her about it — we have her color things blue. If she grabs toys, we teach her to ask the right way and stand beside her while she does.

That is what we need to do for our learning teachers, whether they are still in training programs or already working in our schools — help and stand by. We need to offer continuing support with regular refresher opportunities; the state needs to pay them stipends for attending; we need to contrive ways to end their isolation, perhaps by facilitating their sharing visits and videotapes with colleagues and supporting a team of master teachers who can travel to their schools and team-teach with them for a week. Affordable? No, but neither is the kind of residential care, in jail or a hospital, that truly effective EBD programs can go a long way to prevent.

We have cast a dubious professional eye on canned programs such as Assertive Discipline (Evans, Evans, Gable, and Kehlhem, 1991). Part of its huge success may be due to the implied control it gives to teachers by its use and even by its name, but part of its success is also undoubtedly due to its accessibility. A one-day workshop, a manual, some materials, and you are off and running. By having it offered as a school-wide program, the teacher not only knows what to do, he knows he has built-in administrative and peer support for doing it.

Why are not the best of our professional programs made similarly available? As the Peacock Hill Working Group points out, "some of the most impressive programs for conduct disordered and socially withdrawn children at the elementary school level have come from work at the University of Oregon." (p. ll) Where are they? What are their critical elements, and how can they be packaged and marketed so they will spread the farthest and do the most? Their PASS program includes a wonderful clock with green and red lights on it that the teacher operates with a cordless signal, giving children feedback about their behavior and how they are adding up minutes for a special activity. Shared among programs in a district or among classrooms in a building, it would be an arresting, amusing gadget that could be the focus for a lot of inservice to staff about the use and importance of positive feedback in improving children's classroom behavior. Now, we can only learn about it in full detail by sending for and reading University of Oregon research reports, not so likely to be done by weary teachers on the line in the field.

Teachers are not lazy, but they are often tired. Furthermore, some of what made them choose to be teachers instead of university professors is that many have no great love of reading research after all. All day teaching of the same children for years consumes a lot of materials, and some EBD teachers

in rural districts, for instance, must plan for students from first through sixth grades daily. Their cry in faculty rooms, at inservices and conferences, is, "Does it have anything in it I can use?" By use, they mean open up a manual, read the directions, copy a worksheet or gather some materials, and have a lesson set to go. Rather that deploring this behavior, we need to think creatively about it. What can we package this way that will travel the farthest toward our goal of improving academic and behavioral instruction for EBD children and teenagers? An example of this having been done effectively is The Walker Social Skills Curriculum (1983). Not only does the teacher have "something she can use" ready with little extra planning beyond having read it through first, she actually has entire teaching scripts, and once the teacher has taught the program through according to the scripts, she will find that she has acquired a wonderful set of direct teaching skills that she can apply throughout her program.

SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS AND AN END TO ISOLATION

We say we cannot do enough in a one-day workshop to help teachers out substantially, so what can we do? In a world of video everything, surely there are ways to communicate needed information, show how to do things the right way, actually enter far-off buildings to answer questions and share techniques. Instead of giving one-day workshops by standing before a crowd of people and talking to them about what they can do, we can lead remedial coping classes where small groups of participants will be shown what to do by trained group leaders who will keep them on-task, challenged, practicing. If our students, the teachers-in-training, are trained in specific skills, they can make up cadres of peer trainers in schools as part of their programs — how better to help them acquire the consulting and training skills they will need not only in the EBD classroom, but in collaborative programs with their mainstream colleagues to come? Or perhaps we can convert conferences, where often what one gains is a matter of serendipity, into focused training weeks, offering credit for advanced courses in the manner of a Berlitz blitz. Or remember those lab schools where teachers-in-training could work with real students every day . . .

What we cannot do is give up on our colleagues already in classrooms around the country. The education of children with emotional and behavioral disorders will become more critically important as current trends in our culture continue. We are off and running, and we do not have the luxury of ordering a recall. But as we deal with the call for new kinds of service delivery to the boys and girls in our care, we must consider new means of service delivery to their teachers, too. No one went into teaching because he or she wanted to be boring, controlling, and miserable. We chose the field so that we could do good and change the lives of children — never were their needs greater, or ours.

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